

## MISSIONS POLICY

This policy is to be regarded as principles by which the missions team is to operate. It is designed to guide the team in its deliberations, but it is not intended to dictate decisions. For good and sufficient reasons, as directed by the Holy Spirit, the team may find it advisable to make an exception, acknowledging the exception as such in the minutes. Recognizing that the missions team is under the authority of the membership of the church and overseen by the elders, changes or actions may be reviewed, approved, disapproved or amended as warranted.

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## I. PURPOSE

### A. Purpose of Policy

1. To help achieve a clear sense of direction
2. To define responsibilities of church, missionary and agency
3. To maintain continuity as team membership changes
4. To permit thoughtful evaluation of crucial issues
5. To ensure accountability in the Missions Program

### B. Revision of Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually by the missions team. The general philosophy of the missions policy or any significant changes need to be communicated to the church prior to implementation.

## II STATEMENTS OF BELIEF

### A. Covenant

We, the members of Sawyer Highlands Church, recognize that God, Creator of all and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, clearly revealed in Scripture His plan to disciple all peoples. We call His plan missions. Being mandated by the Lord, we have no choice but to be faithful. His supreme desire is to gather quickly the redeemed from every kindred, tribe, tongue, people and nation. The following verses are irrefutable evidence of the primacy of missions for our local congregation and the whole earthly church of Jesus Christ: Gen. 12:2,3; Is. 49:6; Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 1:8; Rev. 5:9-10.

We believe each Christian is personally accountable for carrying out God's purpose. We also commit ourselves to the truth that SHC is corporately responsible to carry out God's purpose among the nations.

We, therefore, by God's grace, commit ourselves to work diligently and sacrificially for the fulfillment of God's revealed purpose and plan for teaching people of every nation and tribe.

### B. Affiliation

Sawyer Highlands Church is affiliated with a fellowship of churches in the United States and Canada, the Baptist General Conference (BGC). United by a common commitment to missions, we have voluntarily associated with the BGC in order to enhance our local congregation's effort in missions. We will work towards educating members to appreciate and become involved in missions and mobilizing our human and material resources for its support. We will be supportive, as God leads, of the BGC and other worthy and approved mission agencies which help us fulfill our discipling responsibilities.

### C. Philosophy

1. We believe that the Lord has ordained the church to be the main instrument for evangelism and discipleship in the world. Therefore, we feel that it is our primary calling to be involved in ministries which have at their heart the planting, nourishing, supporting and growing of local churches.
2. We feel that it is a priority for us to do what we can to try to reach unreached people with the gospel, those who have no substantial church in which they can be taught and disciplined in the Word of God.
3. We also desire to identify indigenous ministries where Americans work with or under the nationals who lead the ministry.
4. Since we believe that the ministries which receive Faith Promise funds from Sawyer Highlands are an extension of our church's ministries, it is desirous for us to be able to establish long term "sister" relationships with those churches, maintaining contact with them, participating in mutual prayer support, assisting in ministry.
5. We believe that God wants us to be a "sending" church. We want more than the simple practice of "sending our money" to support missions. We want to send our own people as the Lord shows us the need and the resources we have to be able to meet that need.
6. We will seek to motivate and prepare our church's members for personal participation in local, national and foreign missions service. Part of having a "sister" relationship may be sending our own members to them for short term service.

### III. THE MISSIONS TEAM

#### A. Responsibilities of the Team

1. To administer the annual Faith Promise Commitments, which formulate the missions budget and to recommend to the congregation the distribution of those funds.
  - a. The Faith Promise pledges/commitments will be taken during a month in which missions is emphasized. This fiscal year for Faith Promise will be June 1 through May 31.
  - b. All designated funds toward approved missionaries will be dispersed by approval of the missions team.
2. To interview and select candidates to be supported by the Faith Promise funds. These candidates will be presented to the church body.
3. To regularly communicate with the missionaries, their ministries and the national churches with which they work and are associated.
4. To administer programs aimed at promoting missions among the congregation.
5. To submit a report annually to the church.
6. To sustain an effective congregation-wide prayer ministry in support of missions.

#### B. Individual Areas of Responsibilities

1. The deacon will be appointed by the elders to serve one year and will be responsible for the following duties:
  - a. Prepare the agenda and preside at meetings
  - b. Cooperate with other deacons and the elders in administering and communicating the overall missions program.
  - c. Develop long range missions programs, complete with goals, for integration with the long range plans of the entire church.
2. The secretary is responsible for informing members of meeting and typing and recording of minutes. He/she will also maintain an updated

master copy of the mission policy and other forms.

3. The financial secretary will keep all financial records as obtained from the church office weekly, and will inform the team monthly or current Faith Promise giving and expenditures. He/She will also update the congregation at least quarterly, preferably monthly. Purchase order forms may be signed only by the deacon, as per church office policy (3/07).
4. The correspondence secretary will maintain at least quarterly contact with all missionaries and will keep the missions bulletin board up to date.

### C. Other General Areas of Responsibility

There will reside a designated person over each of these areas of responsibility. He/she may choose members from within the team or the church body to assist in the duties assigned.

1. Missions Conference - responsible for planning and coordinating the annual missions conference; securing speakers, housing and honorariums; overseeing missions emphasis in SS, AM, PM services, and any special events; working with social teams on banquet emphasis, food, decorating and program.
2. Missions Education - responsible for the missions education of the congregation. This could include making people aware of missions books, periodicals and outside conferences.
3. Short-Term Opportunities - responsible for informing SHC members of opportunities for service in conjunction with established ministries and for organizing teams to assist with various ministries. Our primary focus will be missionaries/organizations with whom we have an existing relationship.
4. Short-Term Liaison - responsible for maintaining contact with each short-termer prior to being sent, while they are gone, and follow-up when they return. He/she will assist in their preparations as needed (i.e. prayer letter, fund-raising, liaison to team and to church, team's letter of recommendation to congregation).

D. Frequency of Meetings

The missions team will meet once a month and in other special sessions as called by the deacon.

E. Quorum

The quorum for conducting business will be a simple majority of the members of the missions team.

## IV. SUPPORT POLICIES

### A. Requirements for Agencies

In light of our philosophy principles and to understand our relationship with and responsibilities to our missionaries and their mission organization/agency, we will seek to apply these guidelines.

1. Request each agency to send us:

a. a definition of their purposes and statement of the programs, doctrinal position, support raising policies and structure.

b. Also included for the specific missionary will be their individual budget, including health and retirement plans.

2. Request the agency to keep us advised of major field development and changes and the status of those missionaries we support.

### B. General Requirements for all Candidates

1. The candidate must be presently active in the ministry of the church, qualified for the work which he/she is going to do, and shall give evidence of maturity and on-going spiritual growth (Acts 6:13; Acts 13:2-5; I Tim. 3:1-13).

2. The pastoral staff will evaluate each career/term candidate to assure they have a working knowledge of the Scriptures and demonstrate the ability to explain and defend the doctrinal statements of SHC. (The short-term candidate should be growing in their knowledge of Scriptures and their ability to defend basic doctrines.)

### C. Working Relationship between all missionaries and SHC

1. Authority -

a. Those sent by a mission agency: A signed copy of a covenant/contract between the mission agency will be kept in our file, including the missionary's ministry goals, visions, and initiatives. It is also expected that the missionary will be submissive to the leadership of Sawyer Highlands Church as we partner with the

sending agency.

b. Those sent from Sawyer Highlands without an existing mission agency: Believing that God has ordained elders/overseers to govern SHC, it is required that each missionary sent from SH be submissive to our church leadership and to the recognized authority on the field. A covenant, signed by the missionary and the elder of missions will be kept on file, including the missionary's goals, visions, and anticipated initiatives.

2. Communication - Each approved missionary will send a personal letter of initial information and prayer requests to their supporters and to the church body as a whole. This can be in the form of email or paper mail. A minimum of quarterly, written communication will be also be maintained between the missionary and the church while on the field.

3. Additional Financial Support - All missionaries who are support by SH shall not actively seek further financial support from within the church family without approval of the missions team. A letter of endorsement from the missions team should precede or be sent with the candidate's initial letter of support given to the congregation.

D. Specifics for Career/Term Missionaries (It is strongly recommended that career missionaries partner with an approved missionary agency)

1. Priority of consideration for support will be based on our philosophy, knowing it is unlikely that any missionary candidate will meet all six points.

2. Application Process

- a. Intent or desire to serve as a missionary should be made known to the missions team as early as possible.
- b. A letter of acceptance and recommendation of the applicant should be submitted from the sponsoring mission agency or organization.
- c. The applicant will be interviewed by either persons from the pastoral staff, elders, or missions team, or any combination thereof.
- d. Signed Covenant(s) as described above will be kept on file.

3. Financial Consideration

- a. It is our desired goal to support each missionary unit not less than

10% of the total support needed.

- b. Support for approved candidates may begin at least one month, but no more than three months prior to departure for assigned field or service. Special situations described by the sending agency will be reviewed individually.
- c. Each missionary will be required to submit an annual report of their financial report and ministry.
- d. Missionaries who fail to communicate in a timely manner (as described in point IV-C-2) may have their funds temporarily suspended until such communication is received.
- e. When a missionary takes a leave of absence from his present ministry, his financial support will be discontinued until such time that he resumes his previous ministry, and at that time his support status will be re-evaluated.
- f. When it is necessary to withdraw the support of a missionary, it shall be at the time of home assignment or after withdrawal from the mission or field.